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Statement submitted by Care International, International Center for Research on Women, International Rescue Committee, Inc., Overseas Development Institute, Pathfinder International, Plan International (UK), Save the Children International, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and World Vision International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

We, Care International, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Pathfinder International, Plan International UK, Save the Children International, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), and WorldVision UK, all ECOSOC accredited organisations call on Member States, the UN and Civil Society Organisations to focus on the specific needs of adolescent girls and boys in both rural and urban settings.

Adolescence is a critical time for young people to obtain knowledge and skills, and to prepare for a healthy and empowered adulthood. In adolescence, however, gendered social norms become increasingly influential, resulting in girls facing increasing violence, discrimination and restrictions on their mobility, behaviours and access to information and services.

Tackling the vulnerabilities adolescents face is a necessary part of Leave(ing) No One Behind. Adolescents, including those with disabilities, from ethnic minorities, displaced and refugee communities, married girls, child mothers, adolescents living in informal settlements, slums or remote rural locales — need tailored solutions to the challenges they face.

Through the research carried out by the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) consortium, to which we all belong, we know that interventions which systematically address adolescents' unique needs and are designed with adolescents can help accelerate progress against the effects of poverty, inequality and discrimination.

We call on you, Member States, UN and CSOs to adopt a holistic rights-based whole community, whole adolescent approach and join our efforts to:

1. Invest in Education and Learning, especially access, quality, and secondary school transitions and completion.

2. Protect adolescents' bodily integrity and freedom from violence, including combatting child, early and forced marriage, harmful traditional practices, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse.

3. Improve all domains of adolescent health, including nutrition and access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

4. Promote adolescent psychosocial well-being and resilience, including addressing mental health needs.

5. Foster adolescents' voice and agency to meaningfully participate in household, school and community decisions.

6. Invest in the foundations of adolescent empowerment including financial literacy, technical and vocational skills, and age-appropriate access to credit.

We remind you that the success of the 2030 SDGs depends on how 1.2 billion adolescents, aged 10–19, navigate this crucial life stage, and call on you to:

- invest in the design and implementation of evidence-informed and scalable adolescent programming and policies that speak to contextualised needs, prioritizing meaningful engagement and partnerships with adolescents themselves; and
- collect sex, age and disability disaggregated data, and ensure programmes and policies are monitored, evaluated and improved on the basis of evidence, contributing to a more robust global evidence base and more effective future interventions.